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9  
10 **IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA**  
11 **IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF PIMA**

12 STATE OF ARIZONA, *ex rel.* TERRY  
GODDARD, Attorney General,

13 Plaintiff,

14 -vs-

15 PFIZER INC,

16 Defendant.

**C20087337**

Case No: \_\_\_\_\_

**COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE AND  
OTHER RELIEF**

(Unclassified Civil)

**PAUL TANG**

18  
19 1. Attorney General Terry Goddard, on behalf of the State of Arizona, brings this civil  
20 action in the public interest against DEFENDANT PFIZER INC for violating A.R.S. § 44-1521 et  
21 seq., as follows:

22 **PARTIES**

23 2. Plaintiff, the State of Arizona, represented by Attorney General Terry Goddard,  
24 who brings this action pursuant to the authority granted under A.R.S. § 44-1521 et seq.

25 3. Defendant Pfizer Inc, ("Pfizer") is a Delaware corporation with its principal place  
26 of business in New York. At all relevant times, Pfizer did business in the State of Arizona

1 selling and promoting prescription drugs, including Bextra® and Celebrex®. In 2002, Pfizer  
2 purchased Pharmacia, a Delaware corporation, and merged the two companies' Bextra® and  
3 Celebrex® sales forces. Prior to this sale, the two companies' co-marketed Bextra® and  
4 Celebrex® and closely coordinated all promotional efforts. In addition for its own conduct  
5 marketing Bextra® and Celebrex®, Defendant Pfizer is also responsible for Pharmacia's  
6 conduct. The conduct of both Pfizer and Pharmacia shall hereinafter be referred to collectively  
7 as conduct by DEFENDANT.

8 4. DEFENDANT at all relevant times has transacted business in the State of  
9 Arizona. The violations of law alleged herein have been and are being carried out within the  
10 State of Arizona.

#### 11 JURISDICTION AND VENUE

12 5. This Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter and DEFENDANT of this  
13 action pursuant to A.R.S. § 44-1521 et seq. Venue is in Pima County, Arizona.

#### 14 SUMMARY OF THE ACTION

15 6. The State filed this Complaint because DEFENDANT engaged in repeated  
16 deceptive acts, methods and practices with the purpose of achieving greater sales of Bextra®  
17 than it otherwise would have been able to achieve had they complied with the law.  
18 DEFENDANT achieved these sales in large part by misleading physicians and health  
19 professionals, consumers and others about the safety and efficacy of Bextra®, and about the  
20 indications for which Bextra® was approved.

21 7. DEFENDANT'S unlawful marketing of Bextra® began in 2001 after the U.S.  
22 Food and Drug Administration ("FDA") declined to approve Bextra® for all of the uses and  
23 indications that DEFENDANT were counting on to make Bextra® a financial "blockbuster."  
24 Rather than simply marketing Bextra® for the more limited FDA-approved indications,  
25 DEFENDANT engaged in an aggressive, deceptive, and unlawful "off label" marketing  
26 campaign to increase sales of Bextra®, a COX-2 inhibitor, to treat acute pain, perioperative pain

1 and opioid sparing uses. These indications or uses for Bextra<sup>®</sup> are referred to as "off-label"  
2 uses because they have not been approved by the FDA. Bextra<sup>®</sup>'s FDA-approved "on-label"  
3 use is limited to 10 milligram doses for the treatment of pain associated with rheumatoid arthritis  
4 and osteo-arthritis and 20 milligram doses for pain associated with primary dysmenorrhea  
5 (menstrual pain).

6 8. As a part of it's "off-label" campaign, DEFENDANT misrepresented that Bextra<sup>®</sup>  
7 was a safe alternative to schedule 2 narcotics and traditional nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories  
8 ("NSAIDs") typically used in the treatment of acute and perioperative pain, marketed Bextra<sup>®</sup> as  
9 reducing serious gastrointestinal side effects without possessing competent and reliable  
10 evidence to support this claim, and failed to disclose that Bextra<sup>®</sup> increased the risk of serious  
11 adverse events including death.

12 9. DEFENDANT also commissioned and disseminated hundreds of thousands of  
13 copies of positive studies relating to off-label uses of Bextra<sup>®</sup> without also providing negative  
14 studies; distributed hundreds of thousands of 20 milligram doses of Bextra<sup>®</sup> to medical  
15 professionals such as orthopedic surgeons who do not generally prescribe for menstrual pain  
16 with the intent that the sample would be used off label; co-opted influential doctors to  
17 encourage off-labeling prescribing; provided meals and gifts to doctors who prescribed Bextra<sup>®</sup>  
18 off-label; promoted Continuing Medical Education ("CME") classes that encouraged off-label  
19 uses; rewarded high off-label prescribers with paid "preceptorships" and consultancies;  
20 disseminated print advertisements with text and imagery that communicated Bextra<sup>®</sup>'s  
21 supposed efficacy against acute pain; and encouraged sales representatives to promote off-  
22 label uses in their sales calls. Instead of marketing Bextra<sup>®</sup> safely and responsibly,  
23 DEFENDANT was driven by their narrow desire to maximize profits.

#### 24 **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

#### 25 **Cox-2 Painkillers Were Developed in a Lucrative Market.**

1        10.        NSAIDs such as naproxen (Aleve®) and ibuprofen (Advil®) have been widely  
2 prescribed for many years to treat the symptoms of arthritis as well as chronic and acute pain  
3 from other causes. NSAIDs are highly effective against pain and inflammation; however, they  
4 can cause gastrointestinal ("GI") side effects, including serious adverse events such as  
5 obstructions, bleeds, and perforations. These drugs are also sold over-the-counter ("OTC") at  
6 dosages lower than prescription strength. For the most part, NSAIDs are available generically  
7 and are thus significantly cheaper than branded COX-2 drugs.

8        11.        NSAIDs work against pain and inflammation by inhibiting enzymes known as  
9 cyclo-oxygenase or COX. There are two forms of COX enzymes: COX-1 and COX-2. COX-1  
10 is involved in the maintenance and repair of the GI system.

11        12.        Selective COX-2 inhibitors ("COX-2 drugs") are drugs that block COX-2 without  
12 affecting COX-1. This class of drugs was developed in the 1990s in hope of reducing pain and  
13 inflammation without blocking COX-1's beneficial effect on the GI system; however, the  
14 scientific studies of COX-2 drugs have been inconclusive regarding gastrointestinal safety.

15        13.        The scientific rationale and justification for COX-2 drugs was safety, not efficacy.  
16 No scientifically valid clinical trial has ever found COX-2 drugs to be more effective for  
17 treatment of pain and inflammation than traditional NSAIDs.

18        14.        There are significant concerns that COX-2 drugs as a class may increase the risk  
19 of cardiovascular ("CV") adverse events such as stroke and heart attacks.

20        15.        In total, three COX-2 drugs have been approved for sale in the United States:  
21 Celebrex® (celecoxib), Vioxx® (rofecoxib), and Bextra® (valdecoxib). DEFENDANT began  
22 marketing Celebrex® in early 1999 and Merck followed several months later with Vioxx®. In  
23 early 2002, DEFENDANT began marketing Bextra®. Ultimately, Vioxx® was withdrawn from the  
24 market in 2004; Bextra® was withdrawn in 2005, and that same year, Celebrex® was given a  
25 "black box" warning on its label concerning CV risks associated with COX-2 drugs.

1 16. DEFENDANT competed vigorously with Merck for the rapidly expanding COX-2  
2 market. DEFENDANT'S sales representatives were paid significant bonuses to get doctors to  
3 switch patients from Vioxx® to Celebrex® or Bextra®.

4 17. Celebrex® was disadvantaged in its competition with Vioxx® because unlike  
5 Vioxx®, Celebrex® was not initially approved for the treatment of acute pain. Although  
6 eventually Celebrex® was approved for this indication, the late approval impaired Celebrex®'s  
7 ability to compete in the acute pain market and many doctors considered Celebrex® less  
8 effective against acute pain.

9 **Defendant Developed Bextra® to Be a "Blockbuster" Painkiller but Studies Revealed**  
10 **Safety Concerns.**

11 18. DEFENDANT planned to "create the next [COX-2] blockbuster" by marketing  
12 Bextra® as a "powerful agent" for both acute and chronic pain with strength equal to that of a  
13 schedule 2 narcotic. Bextra®'s initial product profile identified acute pain, opioid sparing, and  
14 preemptive analgesia associated with the treatment of surgical pain as Bextra®'s distinguishing  
15 qualities. By focusing on these qualities, DEFENDANT sought to supplement Celebrex®'s  
16 perceived weaknesses against acute pain with Bextra®'s strength and prevent Bextra® from  
17 cannibalizing Celebrex® sales. Bextra® would primarily target young active patients with acute  
18 pain while Celebrex® would primarily target older patients with chronic pain (e.g. – pain  
19 associated with arthritis). Bextra® would compete directly against Vioxx® in the acute pain  
20 market while Celebrex® would compete primarily against traditional NSAIDs including OTC  
21 drugs, for chronic pain.

22 19. On November 27, 2001, the FDA approved the 10mg dose Bextra® for the  
23 treatment of pain associated with rheumatoid arthritis and osteo-arthritis and the 20 milligram  
24 dose for pain associated with primary dysmenorrhea, but expressly rejected Bextra®'s use at  
25 any dose for acute and perioperative pain and opioid sparing indications. The FDA rejected  
26 Bextra® for those uses primarily because the Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Study 035 ("CABG

1 l") demonstrated an excess of serious adverse events including death in association with  
2 Bextra® and Bextra®'s pro-drug, parecoxib.

3 20. CABG I was a randomized, double-blind comparison of two groups of patients  
4 who underwent coronary artery bypass graft surgery. One group in the study received Bextra®  
5 and parecoxib, along with narcotics, to treat perioperative pain. The other group only received  
6 narcotics (also known as the "standard of care"). DEFENDANT'S goal for CABG I was to  
7 demonstrate that Bextra® was safe and effective to treat surgical pain and reduce the incidence  
8 of narcotic related adverse events such as nausea, constipation, and somnambulism. The  
9 results of the CABG I study, however, showed that although patients given Bextra® used fewer  
10 narcotics, there was no reduction in narcotic related side effects. Further, patients given  
11 Bextra® suffered twice as many Serious Adverse Events ("SAEs") compared to patients who did  
12 not receive Bextra®.

13 21. To minimize the safety concerns raised by CABG I, DEFENDANT compared  
14 Bextra®'s SAE rate with observational reports outside the study and claimed that Bextra®'s SAE  
15 rate was within normal limits. This substitution of an after the fact control group data is  
16 scientifically dishonest and contrary to generally accepted scientific methods. DEFENDANT  
17 attempted to further minimize the negative results of CABG I by claiming there was a "failure of  
18 randomization" that caused weaker patients to be placed in the Bextra® test group.

19 22. In addition, in an attempt to frame the negative CABG I results as a fluke, on or  
20 about January 28, 2003, DEFENDANT began a second clinical trial relating to Bextra® and  
21 CABG surgery. The "CABG II" study compared three similarly sized groups: patients who  
22 received narcotics; patients who received narcotics plus Bextra®; and patients who received  
23 narcotics, Bextra®, and parecoxib.

24 23. DEFENDANT enrolled patients into their CABG II study without disclosing to  
25 them that their counterparts in CABG I experienced a doubling of SAEs. Rather, the increased  
26

1 SAE rate was minimized and potential subjects were told that side effects in CABG I were  
2 within the expected number of side effects typically seen in CABG surgeries.

3 24. CABG II confirmed the risk of high dose Bextra® for post-operative pain relief:  
4 patients who received Bextra® experienced significantly more heart attacks and other  
5 cardiovascular problems compared to patients who did not receive Bextra®.

6 25. CABG II combined with CABG I raised significant concerns about the safety of  
7 Bextra® for all patients, even at low doses. Nonetheless, DEFENDANT continued to promote  
8 high dose Bextra® for acute pain and perioperative uses.

9 26. In November 2004, the FDA required DEFENDANT to disclose the negative SAE  
10 data results of both CABG studies in a revised package insert for Bextra®.

11 27. Nonetheless, beginning in 2001 after the FDA denial of certain indications and  
12 despite clear evidence of risks associated with high dosing of Bextra®, DEFENDANT proceeded  
13 with its original marketing plan to market Bextra® for the now FDA-disapproved indications of  
14 acute, perioperative pain and opioid sparing indications.

15 **DEFENDANT Created and Distributed Biased Science and Unfair and Imbalanced**  
16 **Information.**

17 28. As part of their illegal marketing efforts, DEFENDANT unlawfully distributed and  
18 discussed many studies that described off-label indications. Notwithstanding official and legal  
19 admonitions against using off-label studies for marketing efforts, DEFENDANT disseminated  
20 hundreds of thousands of clinical studies that supported using Bextra® for acute and  
21 perioperative pain and opioid sparing use for the purpose of promoting Bextra® for off-label  
22 use. Additionally, DEFENDANT did not comply with requirements to balance favorable  
23 information by the equal distribution of relevant unfavorable studies, and DEFENDANT did not  
24 disclose the negative results from the CABG studies or the FDA's rejection of Bextra® for acute,  
25 perioperative pain and opioid sparing indications.

1           29.     DEFENDANT disseminated hundreds of thousands of copies of an article entitled  
2 "Valdecoxib, a COX-2 -- Specific Inhibitor, Is an Efficacious Opioid-Sparing Analgesic in  
3 Patients Undergoing Hip Arthroplasty," by Frederic Camu, M.D. ("Camu"), which was published  
4 in the American Journal of Therapeutics in 2002. DEFENDANT distributed the Camu study to  
5 orthopedic surgeons, anesthesiologists, and other surgical specialists knowing these specialists  
6 would be prescribing Bextra<sup>®</sup> off-label for perioperative pain and opioid sparing.

7           30.     DEFENDANT distributed hundreds of thousands of copies of an article entitled  
8 "Valdecoxib Does Not Impair Platelet Function," by Philip T. Leese, M.D. ("Leese"), which was  
9 published in the Journal of Emergency Medicine in 2002. DEFENDANT distributed the Leese  
10 article as proof that Bextra<sup>®</sup> could be used for perioperative pain without causing increased  
11 bleeding after surgery.

12          31.     DEFENDANT also distributed hundreds of thousands of copies of an article  
13 entitled "The Analgesic Efficacy of Valdecoxib Versus Oxycodone/Acetaminophen after Oral  
14 Surgery," by Stephen E. Daniels, D.O. ("Daniels"), which was published in the Journal of the  
15 American Dental Association (JADA) in 2002. DEFENDANT commissioned the Daniels study  
16 as part of a strategy to create and disseminate medical studies that supported prescribing  
17 Bextra<sup>®</sup> for perioperative pain and opioid sparing use. The Daniels study was not conducted by  
18 a mainstream academic organization; rather DEFENDANT hired SCIREX, a contract research  
19 organization owned by a large advertising company, and hired by DEFENDANT. The Daniels  
20 study was designed to produce misleading study results because it compared Bextra<sup>®</sup> to a  
21 single dose of a medicine that is usually given in multiple doses. Although the Daniels study  
22 was published by Journal of the American Dental Association ("JADA"), one of the journal's  
23 editors later explained that they were not told that Bextra<sup>®</sup> was disapproved for the treatment of  
24 acute pain. Had JADA's editors known the truth, the Daniels study would not have been  
25 published.



1        32.        DEFENDANT widely disseminated the Camu, Leese, and Daniels studies to its  
2 sales representatives, urged them to distribute the articles on their sales calls, and provided  
3 them with discussion notes that enabled sales representatives to discuss these off-label studies  
4 during their sales calls. Although the materials DEFENDANT produced for sales  
5 representatives often contained a "do not detail" advisement cautioning against any discussion  
6 of the studies during sales calls, the warning was illusory and widely ignored.

7        33.        DEFENDANT also attempted to hire influential medical professionals to present  
8 the results of these studies in order to give a false appearance of reliability to DEFENDANT  
9 own self-generated and financed study results.

10        34.        In 2003, the Journal of Thoracic and Cardiac Surgery published CABG I as an  
11 article entitled "Efficacy and Safety of the Cyclooxygenase 2 Inhibitors Parecoxib and  
12 Valdecoxib in Patients Undergoing Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery" by Elisabeth Ott, M.D.  
13 ("Ott"). This article raised important concerns about the safety of high dose Bextra® for  
14 treatment of acute and perioperative pain and for opioid sparing uses and suggested the need  
15 for a comprehensive evaluation of a large-scale trial before using Bextra® to treat vulnerable  
16 patients. DEFENDANT promoted Bextra® for acute and perioperative pain and opioid sparing  
17 uses yet failed to disclose this article to the medical community and did not approve it for  
18 distribution by sales representatives.

19        35.        DEFENDANT also promoted off-label uses of Bextra® in medical inquiry  
20 response letters. FDA regulations permit drug manufacturers to provide off-label information in  
21 response to an unsolicited inquiry from a medical professional so long as the responsive  
22 material contains balanced information and is not promotional. Similar to its strategy of  
23 distributing only favorable off-label medical articles, DEFENDANT disclosed only favorable data  
24 about acute and perioperative pain and opioid sparing indications in their responses to medical  
25 inquiries and omitted negative CABG I results and the FDA denials.

1 Defendant Improperly Distributed Free Samples of Bextra® with the Intent to Have Samples  
2 Used for Off-label Indications.

3 36. DEFENDANT promoted off-label use of Bextra® to treat acute and perioperative  
4 pain and opioid sparing by giving hundreds of thousands of 20 milligram Bextra® samples to  
5 surgeons, anesthesiologists, and other surgical and pain specialists who do not customarily  
6 treat severe menstrual cramps, but who do treat acute and perioperative pain. DEFENDANT  
7 intended for medical specialists to use the 20 milligram samples to treat acute and perioperative  
8 pain and for opioid sparing use but failed to disclose the negative results from the CABG I and  
9 CABG II studies and failed to disclose that FDA had rejected these indications due to concerns  
10 about their safety.

11 **Defendant Employed an Enormous Sales Staff to Market Bextra® for Off-Label Uses.**

12 37. DEFENDANT relied heavily on their enormous sales staff to market Bextra® for  
13 off-label and FDA-denied indications. DEFENDANT produced deceptive sales messages that  
14 promoted Bextra® for acute and perioperative pain and opioid sparing and trained sales  
15 representatives to effectively use this messaging to increase off-label sales. Sales  
16 representatives promoted Bextra®'s off-label indications to health care providers and were  
17 encouraged to detail health care providers extensively about these FDA-denied indications.

18 38. Sales managers carefully tracked sales representatives' success in conveying  
19 DEFENDANT'S messages by monitoring electronic call notes submitted by sales  
20 representatives and accompanying them on sales calls. DEFENDANT also knew that sales  
21 representatives were detailing Bextra® for acute and perioperative pain based on surveys  
22 conducted by consultants hired by DEFENDANT to track and monitor prescribing information.

23 39. DEFENDANT sought to increase Bextra® sales for acute and perioperative pain  
24 and opioid sparing by aggressively targeting surgeons, surgery centers, and hospitals to get  
25 Bextra® placed on "standing orders" and "protocols" for these indications. Surgery centers and  
26 hospitals rely on standing orders and protocols for analgesic dosing regimes associated with

1 perioperative pain. DEFENDANT'S success in placing Bextra® on surgical standing orders  
2 directly increased Bextra® sales, served as a powerful tool for promoting Bextra® to other  
3 doctors and hospitals, and increased the likelihood that surgical patients would remain on  
4 Bextra® to treat chronic pain conditions after surgery.

5 40. DEFENDANT also obtained examples of surgical protocols and standing orders  
6 that included analgesic dosing regimes for Bextra® and disseminated these samples to sales  
7 representatives. DEFENDANT held contests and rewarded sales representatives with  
8 recognition, accolades, and cash equivalent prizes for obtaining high volume standing order  
9 sales.

10 **Defendant Engaged in Off-Label Advertising to Consumers and Providers Using the**  
11 **Pretense of Education.**

12 41. Physician education programs were another integral part of DEFENDANT'S  
13 scheme to promote Bextra® for acute and perioperative pain and opioid sparing indications.  
14 DEFENDANT hired surgeons, anesthesiologists, and other pain specialists to conduct  
15 physician education programs ranging from informal luncheon presentations to Continuing  
16 Medical Education programs. DEFENDANT knew off-label topics would be discussed at these  
17 programs and provided speakers with presentation slides containing favorable off-label data  
18 and information about Bextra®.

19 42. DEFENDANT'S market research indicated that more patients suffered from non-  
20 arthritis pain than arthritis pain. To reach beyond the arthritis pain market, DEFENDANT  
21 developed and widely used marketing materials that promoted Bextra® to treat acute pain  
22 caused by sprains, strains, tendonitis, and bursitis. To avoid the appearance of off-label  
23 marketing, however, DEFENDANT'S sales messages used euphemisms for acute pain such as  
24 "tough pain," "flare pain," "acute pain condition," and "episodic pain" and visual imagery that  
25 evoked strong and powerful pain relief.

1        43.        DEFENDANT also used patient-type marketing to enhance its acute pain  
2 message for Bextra®. Throughout its marketing campaign, DEFENDANT consistently targeted  
3 the young active “weekend warrior” patient with tough episodic pain for Bextra®. In contrast,  
4 and to distinguish the target market for Celebrex®, DEFENDANT promoted Celebrex® for the  
5 older patient suffering from chronic pain.

6        44.        DEFENDANT’S marketing surveys, focus groups, and feedback from its field  
7 sales force confirmed that doctors consistently perceived Bextra®’s strong powerful pain relief  
8 messaging as targeting the acute pain market.

9        45.        DEFENDANT also promoted its “weekend warrior” imagery in its direct-to-  
10 consumer advertising. DEFENDANT distributed hundreds of thousands of copies of a self-  
11 published periodical called Perform Magazine that contained multiple images and messages  
12 promoting Bextra®’s strong powerful pain relief. Perform Magazine was sent to subscribers of  
13 People magazine and widely distributed in patient waiting rooms.

14        46.        DEFENDANT invited surgeons and other pain specialists who were likely to  
15 prescribe Bextra® off-label to so-called “consultant” meetings. Although DEFENDANT claimed  
16 these meetings were not promotional, they conducted return on investment analysis on some  
17 attendees to determine whether there was a sufficient increase in prescriptions to financially  
18 justify the costs of the meetings.

19        **Defendant Gave Improper Inducements, Payments, and Gifts to Physicians.**

20        47.        To illegally promote Bextra® off-label from within the medical community,  
21 DEFENDANT also hired surgeons, podiatrists, anesthesiologists, and other specialties to  
22 conduct Bextra® off-label dinner talks and round tables. DEFENDANT sought out and  
23 developed physician speakers who were high prescribers of Bextra® and supported its off-label  
24 use – these health care providers were then paid to give lunch or dinner talks relating to off-  
25 label use of Bextra®.

1 48. DEFENDANT maintained a stable of recommended and paid physician-speakers  
2 that sales staff could use for off-label Bextra® dinner talks. Sales staff often worked with  
3 physicians on their presentations, and encouraged health care providers to talk about off-label  
4 uses, even though this practice is prohibited. Talks were conducted at expensive top flight  
5 restaurants. DEFENDANT conducted analyses on physicians to confirm that their prescribing  
6 behavior increased after speaking or after attending dinner programs.

7 49. DEFENDANT rewarded doctors who were high off-label prescribers of Bextra®  
8 with "preceptorships" in which the doctor was paid up to \$500 to allow Bextra® sales  
9 representatives to follow him or her around on clinical rounds and attend surgeries.

10 50. DEFENDANT used preceptorships to gain access to doctors who otherwise  
11 would not allow sales representatives to visit their office. During the preceptorship, the sales  
12 representatives were encouraged to discuss using Bextra® to treat acute and perioperative  
13 pain.

14 51. DEFENDANT also cultivated off-label Bextra® prescribers by rewarding certain  
15 prescribers with clinical research grants and contracts.

16 52. In addition to gifts to prescribers, DEFENDANT provided grants to certain  
17 medical centers and hospitals and leveraged the resultant "goodwill" to promote off-label use of  
18 Bextra®.

19 **To Enhance Its Unlawful Marketing Campaign, Defendant Concealed and**  
20 **Misrepresented Bextra®'s Safety and Risks.**

21 53. As DEFENDANT marketed Bextra® to more health care providers, for more  
22 patients, and for a wider assortment of illnesses and pain types, DEFENDANT consistently  
23 avoided, minimized, and failed to disclose material health and safety risks. DEFENDANT  
24 deceptively marketed Bextra® as the most powerful non-narcotic medication without clinically  
25 reliable evidence for such a claim, and while omitting important information that showed Bextra®  
26 was no better and potentially more dangerous than traditional NSAIDs in treating pain.

1        54.        DEFENDANT'S decision to minimize or fail to disclose the results from CABG I,  
2 the study which was the basis for the FDA's denial of Bextra® for acute pain prevented doctors  
3 from fully educating themselves about Bextra® and created a dangerous situation where health  
4 care providers were prescribing a drug without knowing all of the risks.

5        55.        DEFENDANT also deceptively promoted Bextra®'s gastrointestinal safety in  
6 brochures mailed directly to consumers. Although Bextra®'s FDA approval label cautioned that  
7 Bextra® could cause serious and life-threatening gastrointestinal side effects, including bleeding  
8 in the stomach and intestines, DEFENDANT'S direct to consumer brochures misrepresented  
9 that, for patients who take Bextra®, the "stomach stays protected." DEFENDANT ran a similarly  
10 deceptive advertisement in Perform Magazine.

11        56.        DEFENDANT'S sales staff told health care providers that Bextra® was safe and  
12 effective, without affirmatively explaining side effects or adverse events. DEFENDANT'S sales  
13 executives specifically told sales staff not to initiate discussion of Bextra® safety.

14        57.        DEFENDANT also attempted to confuse health care providers to believe positive  
15 Celebrex® data also applied to Bextra®. DEFENDANT promoted both Bextra® and Celebrex® at  
16 the same time and their marketing materials and representations intentionally conflated  
17 research data so that Celebrex® studies were used to explain the safety and efficacy of Bextra®,  
18 even though Celebrex® was a different drug and approved for different indications.

19                    **DEFENDANT'S Unlawful Marketing Scheme Had a Powerful Effect.**

20        58.        DEFENDANT'S promotional scheme for Bextra® was highly successful. Total  
21 Bextra® sales approached four billion dollars, most of which were for acute and perioperative  
22 pain and opioid sparing indications and not for the 10 milligram dose treatment of pain  
23 associated with rheumatoid arthritis and osteo-arthritis and the 20 milligram dose treatment for  
24 pain associated with primary dysmenorrhea.

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**CAUSE OF ACTION**

59. The Arizona Consumer Protection Act, A.R.S. § 44-1522(A) states:

The act, use, or employment by any person of any deception, deceptive act or practice, fraud, false pretense, false promise, misrepresentation, or concealment, suppression or omission of any material fact with intent that others rely upon such concealment, suppression or omission, in connection with the sale or advertisement of any merchandise whether or not any person has in fact been misled, deceived, or damaged thereby, is declared to be an unlawful practice.

60. The acts and practices set out above constitute consumer fraud under § A.R.S. 44-1521 *et seq.*

61. At all times DEFENDANT acted wilfully acted in violation of A.R.S. § 44-1531.

**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

The State of Arizona respectfully request that a judgment and order be entered that:

1. Permanently enjoins DEFENDANT from engaging in the misleading and deceptive practices as defined in the Arizona Consumer Fraud Act, A.R.S. § 44-1521 *et seq.*

2. Direct DEFENDANT to pay civil penalties for each willful violation pursuant A.R.S. § 44-1522 and A.R.S. § 44-1531.

3. Direct DEFENDANT to pay the State's costs including attorney's fees pursuant to A.R.S. § 44-1534.

4. Grant all other Relief as the Court deems appropriate.

DATED this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 2008.

TERRY GODDARD  
Attorney General

By: Noreen R. Matts  
NOREEN R. MATTS  
Assistant Attorney General